THE FORGOTTEN MAN

—*Rediscovered After Fifty Years*

"He works, he votes, generally he prays—
but he always PAYS.
All the burdens fall on him, or her,
for it is time to remember that the
Forgotten Man is not seldom a woman."

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THE FORGOTTEN MAN AND OTHER ESSAYS
By William Graham Sumner
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THE FORGOTTEN MAN

In 1883 William Graham Sumner, then Professor of Political and Social Science in Yale University, delivered his memorable speech on THE FORGOTTEN MAN. *The address, in its original form, is here reprinted.*

I PROPOSE to discuss one of the most subtle and widespread social fallacies. It consists in the impression made on the mind for the time being by a particular fact, or by the interests of a particular group of persons, to which attention is directed while other facts or the interests of other persons are entirely left out of account. I shall give a number of instances and illustrations of this in a moment, and I cannot expect you to understand what is meant from an abstract statement until these illustrations are before you, but just by way of a general illustration I will put one or two cases.

Whenever a pestilence like yellow fever breaks out in any city, our attention is especially attracted towards it, and our sympathies are excited for the sufferers. If contributions are called for, we readily respond. Yet the number of persons who die prematurely from consumption every year greatly exceeds the deaths from yellow fever or any similar disease when it occurs, and the suffering entailed by consumption is very much greater. The suffering from consumption, however, never constitutes a public question or a subject of social discussion. If an inundation takes place anywhere, constituting a public calamity (and an inundation takes place somewhere in the civilized world nearly every year), public attention is attracted and public appeals are made, but the losses by great inundations must be insignificant compared with the losses by runaway horses, which, taken separately, scarcely obtain mention in a local newspaper. In hard times in-

solvent debtors are a large class. They constitute an interest and are able to attract public attention, so that social philosophers discuss their troubles and legislatures plan measures of relief. Insolvent debtors, however, are an insignificant body compared with the victims of commonplace misfortune, or accident, who are isolated, scattered, ungrouped and ungeneralized, and so are never made the object of discussion or relief. In seasons of ordinary prosperity, persons who become insolvent have to get out of their troubles as they can. They have no hope of relief from the legislature. The number of insolvents during a series of years of general prosperity, and their losses, greatly exceed the number and losses during a special period of distress.

These illustrations bring out only one side of my subject, and that only partially. It is when we come to the proposed measures of relief for the evils which have caught public attention that we reach the real subject which deserves our attention. As soon as A observes something which seems to him to be wrong, from which X is suffering, A talks it over with B, and A and B then propose to get a law passed to remedy the evil and help X. Their law always proposes to determine what C shall do for X or, in the better case, what A, B and C shall do for X. As for A and B, who get a law to make themselves do for X what they are willing to do for him, we have nothing to say except that they might better have done it without any law, but what I want to do is to look up C. I want to show you what manner of man he is. I call him the Forgotten Man. Perhaps the appellation is not strictly correct. He is the man who never is thought of. He is the victim of the reformer, social speculator and philanthropist, and I hope to show you before I get through that he deserves your notice both for his character and for the many burdens which are laid upon him.

No doubt one great reason for the phenomenon which I bring to your attention is the passion for reflection and generalization which marks our period. Since the printing press has come into such wide use, we have all been encouraged to philosophize about things in a way which was unknown to our ancestors. They lived their lives out in positive contact with actual cases as they arose. They had little of this analysis, introspection, reflection and speculation which have passed into a habit and almost into a disease with us. Of all things which tempt to generalization and to philosophizing, social topics stand foremost. Each one of us gets some experience of social forces. Each one has some chance for observation of social phenomena. There is certainly no domain in which generalization is easier. There is nothing about which people dogmatize more freely. Even men of scientific training in some department in which they would not tolerate dogmatism at all will not hesitate to dogmatize in the most reckless manner about social topics. The truth is, however, that science, as yet, has won less control of social phenomena than of any other class of phenomena. The most complex and difficult subject which we now have to study is the constitution of human society, the forces which operate in it, and the laws by which they act, and we know less about these things than about any others which demand our attention. In such a state of things, over-hasty generalization is sure to be extremely mischievous. You cannot take up a magazine or newspaper without being struck by the feverish interest with which social topics and problems are discussed, and if you were a student of social science, you would find in almost all these discussions evidence, not only that the essential preparation for the discussion is wanting, but that the disputants do not even know that there is any preparation to be gained. Consequently we are bewildered by contradictory dogmatizing. We find in

all these discussions only the application of pet notions and the clashing of contradictory "views." Remedies are confidently proposed for which there is no guarantee offered except that the person who prescribes the remedy says that he is sure it will work. We hear constantly of "reform," and the reformers turn out to be people who do not like things as they are and wish that they could be made nicer. We hear a great many exhortations to make progress from people who do not know in what direction they want to go. Consequently social reform is the most barren and tiresome subject of discussion amongst us, except æsthetics.

I suppose that the first chemists seemed to be very hard-hearted and unpoetical persons when they scouted the glorious dream of the alchemists that there must be some process for turning base metals into gold. I suppose that the men who first said, in plain, cold assertion, there is no fountain of eternal youth, seemed to be the most cruel and cold-hearted adversaries of human happiness. I know that the economists who say that if we could transmute lead into gold, it would certainly do us no good and might do great harm, are still regarded as unworthy of belief. Do not the money articles of the newspapers yet ring with the doctrine that we are getting rich when we give cotton and wheat for gold rather than when we give cotton and wheat for iron?

Let us put down now the cold, hard fact and look at it just as it is. There is no device whatever to be invented for securing happiness without industry, economy, and virtue. We are yet in the empirical stage as regards all our social devices. We have done something in science and art in the domain of production, transportation and exchange. But when you come to the laws of the social order, we know very little about them. Our laws and institutions by which we attempt to regulate our lives under the laws of nature which control society are merely a series

of haphazard experiments. We come into collision with the laws and are not intelligent enough to understand wherein we are mistaken and how to correct our errors. We persist in our experiments instead of patiently setting about the study of the laws and facts in order to see where we are wrong. Traditions and formulæ have a dominion over us in legislation and social customs which we seem unable to break or even to modify.

For my present purpose I ask your attention for a few moments to the notion of liberty, because the Forgotten Man would no longer be forgotten where there was true liberty. You will say that you know what liberty is. There is no term of more common or prouder use. None is more current, as if it were quite beyond the need of definition. Even as I write, however, I find in a leading review a new definition of civil liberty. Civil liberty the writer declares to be "the result of the restraint exercised by the sovereign people on the more powerful individuals and classes of the community, preventing them from availing themselves of the excess of their power to the detriment of the other classes." You notice here the use of the words "sovereign people" to designate a class of the population, not the nation as a political and civil whole. Wherever "people" is used in such a sense, there is always fallacy. Furthermore, you will recognize in this definition a very superficial and fallacious construction of English constitutional history. The writer goes on to elaborate that construction and he comes out at last with the conclusion that "a government by the people can, in no case, become a paternal government, since its law-makers are its mandataries and servants carrying out its will, and not its fathers or its masters." This, then, is the point at which he desires to arrive, and he has followed a familiar device in setting up a definition to start with which would produce the desired deduction at the end.

In the definition the word "people" was used for a class or section of the population. It is now asserted that if *that* section rules, there can be no paternal, that is, undue, government. That doctrine, however, is the very opposite of liberty and contains the most vicious error possible in politics. The truth is that cupidity, selfishness, envy, malice, lust, vindictiveness, are constant vices of human nature. They are not confined to classes or to nations or particular ages of the world. They present themselves in the palace, in the parliament, in the academy, in the church, in the workshop, and in the hovel. They appear in autocracies, theocracies, aristocracies, democracies, and ochlocracies all alike. They change their masks somewhat from age to age and from one form of society to another. All history is only one long story to this effect: men have struggled for power over their fellow-men in order that they might win the joys of earth at the expense of others and might shift the burdens of life from their own shoulders upon those of others. It is true that, until this time, the proletariat, the mass of mankind, have rarely had the power and they have not made such a record as kings and nobles and priests have made of the abuses they would perpetrate against their fellow-men when they could and dared. But what folly it is to think that vice and passion are limited by classes, that liberty consists only in taking power away from nobles and priests and giving it to artisans and peasants and that these latter will never abuse it! They will abuse it just as all others have done unless they are put under checks and guarantees, and there can be no civil liberty anywhere unless rights are guaranteed against all abuses, as well from proletarians as from generals, aristocrats, and ecclesiastics.

Now what has been amiss in all the old arrangements? The evils of the old military and aristocratic governments was that some men enjoyed the fruits of other men's labor;

that some persons' lives, rights, interests and happiness were sacrificed to other persons' cupidity and lust. What have our ancestors been striving for, under the name of civil liberty, for the last five hundred years? They have been striving to bring it about that each man and woman might live out his or her life according to his or her own notions of happiness and up to the measure of his or her own virtue and wisdom. How have they sought to accomplish this? They have sought to accomplish it by setting aside all arbitrary personal or class elements and introducing the reign of law and the supremacy of constitutional institutions like the jury, the habeas corpus, the independent judiciary, the separation of church and state, and the ballot. Note right here one point which will be important and valuable when I come more especially to the case of the Forgotten Man: whenever you talk of liberty, you must have *two* men in mind. The sphere of rights of one of these men trenches upon that of the other, and whenever you establish liberty for the one, you repress the other. Whenever absolute sovereigns are subjected to constitutional restraints, you always hear them remonstrate that their liberty is curtailed. So it is, in the sense that their power of determining what shall be done in the state is limited below what it was before and the similar power of other organs in the state is widened. Whenever the privileges of an aristocracy are curtailed, there is heard a similar complaint. The truth is that the line of limit or demarcation between classes as regards civil power has been moved and what has been taken from one class is given to another.

We may now, then, advance a step in our conception of civil liberty. It is the status in which we find the true adjustment of rights between classes and individuals. Historically, the conception of civil liberty has been constantly changing. The notion of rights changes from one generation to another and the conception of civil liberty

changes with it. If we try to formulate a true definition of civil liberty as an ideal thing towards which the development of political institutions is all the time tending, it would be this: Civil liberty is the status of the man who is guaranteed by law and civil institutions the exclusive employment of all his own powers for his own welfare.

This definition of liberty or civil liberty, you see, deals only with concrete and actual relations of the civil order. There is some sort of a poetical and metaphysical notion of liberty afloat in men's minds which some people dream about but which nobody can define. In popular language it means that a man may do as he has a mind to. When people get this notion of liberty into their heads and combine with it the notion that they live in a free country and ought to have liberty, they sometimes make strange demands upon the state. If liberty means to be able to do as you have a mind to, there is no such thing in this world. Can the Czar of Russia do as he has a mind to? Can the Pope do as he has a mind to? Can the President of the United States do as he has a mind to? Can Rothschild do as he has a mind to? Could a Humboldt or a Faraday do as he had a mind to? Could a Shakespeare or a Raphael do as he had a mind to? Can a tramp do as he has a mind to? Where is the man, whatever his station, possessions, or talents, who can get any such liberty? There is none. There is a doctrine floating about in our literature that we are born to the inheritance of certain rights. That is another glorious dream, for it would mean that there was something in this world which we got for nothing. But what is the truth? We are born into no right whatever but what has an equivalent and corresponding duty right alongside of it. There is no such thing on this earth as something for nothing. Whatever we inherit of wealth, knowledge, or institutions from the past has been paid for by the labor and sacrifice of preceding generations; and the fact that

these gains are carried on, that the race lives and that the race can, at least within some cycle, accumulate its gains, is one of the facts on which civilization rests. The law of the conservation of energy is not simply a law of physics; it is a law of the whole moral universe, and the order and truth of all things conceivable by man depends upon it. If there were any such liberty as that of doing as you have a mind to, the human race would be condemned to everlasting anarchy and war as these erratic wills crossed and clashed against each other. True liberty lies in the equilibrium of rights and duties, producing peace, order, and harmony. As I have defined it, it means that a man's right to take power and wealth out of the social product is measured by the energy and wisdom which he has contributed to the social effort.

Now if I have set this idea before you with any distinctness and success, you see that civil liberty consists of a set of civil institutions and laws which are arranged to act as impersonally as possible. It does not consist in majority rule or in universal suffrage or in elective systems at all. These are devices which are good or better just in the degree in which they secure liberty. The institutions of civil liberty leave each man to run his career in life in his own way, only guaranteeing to him that whatever he does in the way of industry, economy, prudence, sound judgment, etc., shall redound to his own welfare and shall not be diverted to some one else's benefit. Of course it is a necessary corollary that each man shall also bear the penalty of his own vices and his own mistakes. If I want to be free from any other man's dictation, I must understand that I can have no other man under my control.

Now with these definitions and general conceptions in mind, let us turn to the special class of facts to which, as I said at the outset, I invite your attention. We see that under a régime of liberty and equality before the law, we

get the highest possible development of independence, self-reliance, individual energy, and enterprise, but we get these high social virtues at the expense of the old sentimental ties which used to unite baron and retainer, master and servant, sage and disciple, comrade and comrade. We are agreed that the son shall not be disgraced even by the crime of the father, much less by the crime of a more distant relative. It is a humane and rational view of things that each life shall stand for itself alone and not be weighted by the faults of another, but it is useless to deny that this view of things is possible only in a society where the ties of kinship have lost nearly all the intensity of poetry and romance which once characterized them. The ties of sentiment and sympathy also have faded out. We have come, under the régime of liberty and equality before the law, to a form of society which is based not on status, but on free contract. Now a society based on status is one in which classes, ranks, interests, industries, guilds, associations, etc., hold men in permanent relations to each other. Custom and prescription create, under status, ties, the strength of which lies in sentiment. Feeble remains of this may be seen in some of our academical societies to-day, and it is unquestionably a great privilege and advantage for any man in our society to win an experience of the sentiments which belong to a strong and close association, just because the chances for such experience are nowadays very rare. In a society based on free contract, men come together as free and independent parties to an agreement which is of mutual advantage. The relation is rational, even rationalistic. It is not poetical. It does not exist from use and custom, but for reasons given, and it does not endure by prescription but ceases when the reason for it ceases. There is no sentiment in it at all. The fact is that, under the régime of liberty and equality before the law, there is no place for sentiment in trade or politics as

public interests. Sentiment is thrown back into private life, into personal relations, and if ever it comes into a public discussion of an impersonal and general public question it always produces mischief.

Now you know that "the poor and the weak" are continually put forward as objects of public interest and public obligation. In the appeals which are made, the terms "the poor" and "the weak" are used as if they were terms of exact definition. Except the pauper, that is to say, the man who cannot earn his living or pay his way, there is no possible definition of a poor man. Except a man who is incapacitated by vice or by physical infirmity, there is no definition of a weak man. The paupers and the physically incapacitated are an inevitable charge on society. About them no more need be said. But the weak who constantly arouse the pity of humanitarians and philanthropists are the shiftless, the imprudent, the negligent, the impractical, and the inefficient, or they are the idle, the intemperate, the extravagant, and the vicious. Now the troubles of these persons are constantly forced upon public attention, as if they and their interests deserved especial consideration, and a great portion of all organized and unorganized effort for the common welfare consists in attempts to relieve these classes of people. I do not wish to be understood now as saying that nothing ought to be done for these people by those who are stronger and wiser. That is not my point. What I want to do is to point out the thing which is overlooked and the error which is made in all these charitable efforts. The notion is accepted as if it were not open to any question that if you help the inefficient and vicious you may gain something for society or you may not, but that you lose nothing. This is a complete mistake. Whatever capital you divert to the support of a shiftless and good-for-nothing person is so much diverted from some other employment, and that means from somebody else. I

would spend any conceivable amount of zeal and eloquence if I possessed it to try to make people grasp this idea. Capital is force. If it goes one way it cannot go another. If you give a loaf to a pauper you cannot give the same loaf to a laborer. Now this other man who would have got it but for the charitable sentiment which bestowed it on a worthless member of society is the Forgotten Man. The philanthropists and humanitarians have their minds all full of the wretched and miserable whose case appeals to compassion, attacks the sympathies, takes possession of the imagination, and excites the emotions. They push on towards the quickest and easiest remedies and they forget the real victim.

Now who is the Forgotten Man? He is the simple, honest laborer, ready to earn his living by productive work. We pass him by because he is independent, self-supporting, and asks no favors. He does not appeal to the emotions or excite the sentiments. He only wants to make a contract and fulfill it, with respect on both sides and favor on neither side. He must get his living out of the capital of the country. The larger the capital is, the better living he can get. Every particle of capital which is wasted on the vicious, the idle, and the shiftless is so much taken from the capital available to reward the independent and productive laborer. But we stand with our backs to the independent and productive laborer all the time. We do not remember him because he makes no clamor; but I appeal to you whether he is not the man who ought to be remembered first of all, and whether, on any sound social theory, we ought not to protect him against the burdens of the good-for-nothing. In these last years I have read hundreds of articles and heard scores of sermons and speeches which were really glorifications of the good-for-nothing, as if these were the charge of society, recommended by right reason to its care and protection. We

are addressed all the time as if those who are respectable were to blame because some are not so, and as if there were an obligation on the part of those who have done their duty towards those who have not done their duty. Every man is bound to take care of himself and his family and to do his share in the work of society. It is totally false that one who has done so is bound to bear the care and charge of those who are wretched because they have not done so. The silly popular notion is that the beggars live at the expense of the rich, but the truth is that those who eat and produce not, live at the expense of those who labor and produce. The next time that you are tempted to subscribe a dollar to a charity, I do not tell you not to do it, because after you have fairly considered the matter, you may think it right to do it, but I do ask you to stop and remember the Forgotten Man and understand that if you put your dollar in the savings bank it will go to swell the capital of the country which is available for division amongst those who, while they earn it, will reproduce it with increase.

Let us now go on to another class of cases. There are a great many schemes brought forward for "improving the condition of the working classes." I have shown already that a free man cannot take a favor. One who takes a favor or submits to patronage demeans himself. He falls under obligation. He cannot be free and he cannot assert a station of equality with the man who confers the favor on him. The only exception is where there are exceptional bonds of affection or friendship, that is, where the sentimental relation supersedes the free relation. Therefore, in a country which is a free democracy, all propositions to do something for the working classes have an air of patronage and superiority which is impertinent and out of place. No one can do anything for anybody else unless he has a surplus of energy to dispose of after taking care of himself. In the United States, the working classes, technically so called,

are the strongest classes. It is they who have a surplus to dispose of if anybody has. Why should anybody else offer to take care of them or to serve them? They can get whatever they think worth having and, at any rate, if they are free men in a free state, it is ignominious and unbecoming to introduce fashions of patronage and favoritism here. A man who, by superior education and experience of business, is in a position to advise a struggling man of the wages class, is certainly held to do so and will, I believe, always be willing and glad to do so; but this sort of activity lies in the range of private and personal relations.

I now, however, desire to direct attention to the public, general, and impersonal schemes, and I point out the fact that, if you undertake to lift anybody, you must have a fulcrum or point of resistance. All the elevation you give to one must be gained by an equivalent depression on some one else. The question of gain to society depends upon the balance of the account, as regards the position of the persons who undergo the respective operations. But nearly all the schemes for "improving the condition of the working man" involve an elevation of some working men at the expense of other working men. When you expend capital or labor to elevate some persons who come within the sphere of your influence, you interfere in the conditions of competition. The advantage of some is won by an equivalent loss of others. The difference is not brought about by the energy and effort of the persons themselves. If it were, there would be nothing to be said about it, for we constantly see people surpass others in the rivalry of life and carry off the prizes which the others must do without. In the cases I am discussing, the difference is brought about by an interference which must be partial, arbitrary, accidental, controlled by favoritism and personal preference. I do not say, in this case, either, that we ought to do no work of this kind. On the contrary, I believe that the

arguments for it quite outweigh, in many cases, the arguments against it. What I desire, again, is to bring out the forgotten element which we always need to remember in order to make a wise decision as to any scheme of this kind. I want to call to mind the Forgotten Man, because, in this case also, if we recall him and go to look for him, we shall find him patiently and perseveringly, manfully and independently struggling against adverse circumstances without complaining or begging. If, then, we are led to heed the groaning and complaining of others and to take measures for helping these others, we shall, before we know it, push down this man who is trying to help himself.

Let us take another class of cases. So far we have said nothing about the abuse of legislation. We all seem to be under the delusion that the rich pay the taxes. Taxes are not thrown upon the consumers with any such directness and completeness as is sometimes assumed; but that, in ordinary states of the market, taxes on houses fall, for the most part, on the tenants and that taxes on commodities fall, for the most part, on the consumers, is beyond question. Now the state and municipality go to great expense to support policemen and sheriffs and judicial officers, to protect people against themselves, that is, against the results of their own folly, vice, and recklessness. Who pays for it? Undoubtedly the people who have not been guilty of folly, vice, or recklessness. Out of nothing comes nothing. We cannot collect taxes from people who produce nothing and save nothing. The people who have something to tax must be those who have produced and saved.

When you see a drunkard in the gutter, you are disgusted, but you pity him. When a policeman comes and picks him up you are satisfied. You say that "society" has interfered to save the drunkard from perishing. Society is a fine word, and it saves us the trouble of thinking to say that society acts. The truth is that the policeman is paid

by somebody, and when we talk about society we forget who it is that pays. It is the Forgotten Man again. It is the industrious workman going home from a hard day's work, whom you pass without noticing, who is mulcted of a percentage of his day's earnings to hire a policeman to save the drunkard from himself. All the public expenditure to prevent vice has the same effect. Vice is its own curse. If we let nature alone, she cures vice by the most frightful penalties. It may shock you to hear me say it, but when you get over the shock, it will do you good to think of it: a drunkard in the gutter is just where he ought to be. Nature is working away at him to get him out of the way, just as she sets up her processes of dissolution to remove whatever is a failure in its line. Gambling and less mentionable vices all cure themselves by the ruin and dissolution of their victims. Nine-tenths of our measures for preventing vice are really protective towards it, because they ward off the penalty. "Ward off," I say, and that is the usual way of looking at it; but is the penalty really annihilated? By no means. It is turned into police and court expenses and spread over those who have resisted vice. It is the Forgotten Man again who has been subjected to the penalty while our minds were full of the drunkards, spendthrifts, gamblers, and other victims of dissipation. Who is, then, the Forgotten Man? He is the clean, quiet, virtuous, domestic citizen, who pays his debts and his taxes and is never heard of out of his little circle. Yet who is there in the society of a civilized state who deserves to be remembered and considered by the legislator and statesman before this man?

Another class of cases is closely connected with this last. There is an apparently invincible prejudice in people's minds in favor of state regulation. All experience is against state regulation and in favor of liberty. The freer the civil institutions are, the more weak or mischievous state

regulation is. The Prussian bureaucracy can do a score of things for the citizen which no governmental organ in the United States can do; and, conversely, if we want to be taken care of as Prussians and Frenchmen are, we must give up something of our personal liberty.

Now we have a great many well-intentioned people among us who believe that they are serving their country when they discuss plans for regulating the relations of employer and employee, or the sanitary regulations of dwellings, or the construction of factories, or the way to behave on Sunday, or what people ought not to eat or drink or smoke. All this is harmless enough and well enough as a basis of mutual encouragement and missionary enterprise, but it is almost always made a basis of legislation. The reformers want to get a majority, that is, to get the power of the state and so to make other people do what the reformers think it right and wise to do. A and B agree to spend Sunday in a certain way. They get a law passed to make C pass it in their way. They determine to be teetotallers and they get a law passed to make C be a teetotaller for the sake of D who is likely to drink too much. Factory acts for women and children are right because women and children are not on an equal footing with men and cannot, therefore, make contracts properly. Adult men, in a free state, must be left to make their own contracts and defend themselves. It will not do to say that some men are weak and unable to make contracts any better than women. Our civil institutions assume that all men are equal in political capacity and all are given equal measure of political power and right, which is not the case with women and children. If, then, we measure political rights by one theory and social responsibilities by another, we produce an immoral and vicious relation. A and B, however, get factory acts and other acts passed regulating the relation of employers and em-

ployee and set armies of commissioners and inspectors traveling about to see to things, instead of using their efforts, if any are needed, to lead the free men to make their own conditions as to what kind of factory buildings they will work in, how many hours they will work, what they will do on Sunday and so on. The consequence is that men lose the true education in freedom which is needed to support free institutions. They are taught to rely on government officers and inspectors. The whole system of government inspectors is corrupting to free institutions. In England, the liberals used always to regard state regulation with suspicion, but since they have come to power, they plainly believe that state regulation is a good thing — if *they* regulate — because, of course, they want to bring about good things. In this country each party takes turns, according as it is in or out, in supporting or denouncing the non-interference theory.

Now, if we have state regulation, what is always forgotten is this: Who pays for it? Who is the victim of it? There always is a victim. The workmen who do not defend themselves have to pay for the inspectors who defend them. The whole system of social regulation by boards, commissioners, and inspectors consists in relieving negligent people of the consequences of their negligence and so leaving them to continue negligent without correction. That system also turns away from the agencies which are close, direct, and germane to the purpose, and seeks others. Now, if you relieve negligent people of the consequences of their negligence, you can only throw those consequences on the people who have not been negligent. If you turn away from the agencies which are direct and cognate to the purpose, you can only employ other agencies. Here, then, you have your Forgotten Man again. The man who has been careful and prudent and who wants to go on and reap his advantages for himself and his children is

arrested just at that point, and he is told that he must go and take care of some negligent employees in a factory or on a railroad who have not provided precautions for themselves or have not forced their employers to provide precautions, or negligent tenants who have not taken care of their own sanitary arrangements, or negligent householders who have not provided against fire, or negligent parents who have not sent their children to school. If the Forgotten Man does not go, he must hire an inspector to go. No doubt it is often worth his while to go or send, rather than leave the thing undone, on account of his remoter interest; but what I want to show is that all this is unjust to the Forgotten Man, and that the reformers and philosophers miss the point entirely when they preach that it is his duty to do all this work. Let them preach to the negligent to learn to take care of themselves. Whenever A and B put their heads together and decide what A, B and C must do for D, there is never any pressure on A and B. They consent to it and like it. There is rarely any pressure on D because he does not like it and contrives to evade it. The pressure all comes on C. Now, who is C? He is always the man who, if let alone, would make a reasonable use of his liberty without abusing it. He would not constitute any social problem at all and would not need any regulation. He is the Forgotten Man again, and as soon as he is brought from his obscurity you see that he is just that one amongst us who is what we all ought to be.

Let us look at another case. I read again and again arguments to prove that criminals have claims and rights against society. Not long ago, I read an account of an expensive establishment for the reformation of criminals, and I am told that we ought to reform criminals, not merely punish them vindictively. When I was a young man, I read a great many novels by Eugene Sue, Victor Hugo, and other Frenchmen of the school of '48, in which the

badness of a bad man is represented, not as his fault, but as the fault of society. Now, as society consists of the bad men plus the good men, and as the object of this declaration was to show that the badness of the bad men was not the fault of the bad men, it remains that the badness of the bad men must be the fault of the good men. No doubt, it is far more consoling to the bad men than even to their friends to reach the point of this demonstration.

Let us ask, now, for a moment, what is the sense of punishment, since a good many people seem to be quite in a muddle about it. Every man in society is bound in nature and reason to contribute to the strength and welfare of society. He ought to work, to be peaceful, honest, just, and virtuous. A criminal is a man who, instead of working with and for society, turns his efforts against the common welfare in some way or other. He disturbs order, violates harmony, invades the security and happiness of others, wastes and destroys capital. If he is put to death, it is on the ground that he has forfeited all right to existence in society by the magnitude of his offenses against its welfare. If he is imprisoned, it is simply a judgment of society upon him that he is so mischievous to the society that he must be segregated from it. His punishment is a warning to him to reform himself, just exactly like the penalties inflicted by God and nature on vice. A man who has committed crime is, therefore, a burden on society and an injury to it. He is a destructive and not a productive force and everybody is worse off for his existence than if he did not exist. Whence, then, does he obtain a right to be taught or reformed at the public expense? The whole question of what to do with him is one of expediency, and it embraces the whole range of possible policies from that of execution to that of education and reformation, but when the expediency of reformatory attempts is discussed we always forget the labor and expense and who must pay.

All that the state does for the criminal, beyond forcing him to earn his living, is done at the expense of the industrious member of society who never costs the state anything for correction and discipline. If a man who has gone astray can be reclaimed in any way, no one would hinder such a work, but people whose minds are full of sympathy and interest for criminals and who desire to adopt some systematic plans of reformatory efforts are only, once more, trampling on the Forgotten Man.

Let us look at another case. If there is a public office to be filled, of course a great number of persons come forward as candidates for it. Many of these persons are urged as candidates on the ground that they are badly off, or that they cannot support themselves, or that they want to earn a living while educating themselves, or that they have female relatives dependent on them, or for some other reason of a similar kind. In other cases, candidates are presented and urged on the ground of their kinship to somebody, or on account of service, it may be meritorious service, in some other line than that of the duty to be performed. Men are proposed for clerkships on the ground of service in the army twenty years ago, or for custom-house inspectors on the ground of public services in the organization of political parties. If public positions are granted on these grounds of sentiment or favoritism, the abuse is to be condemned on the ground of the harm done to the public interest; but I now desire to point out another thing which is constantly forgotten. If you give a position to A, you cannot give it to B. If A is an object of sentiment or favoritism and not a person fit and competent to fulfill the duty, who is B? He is somebody who has nothing but merit on his side, somebody who has no powerful friends, no political influence, some quiet, unobtrusive individual who has known no other way to secure the chances of life than simply to deserve them. Here we have

the Forgotten Man again, and once again we find him worthy of all respect and consideration, but passed by in favor of the noisy, pushing, and incompetent. Who ever remembers that if you give a place to a man who is unfit for it you are keeping out of it somebody, somewhere, who is fit for it?

Let us take another case. A trades-union is an association of journeymen in a certain trade which has for one of its chief objects to raise wages in that trade. This object can be accomplished only by drawing more capital into the trade, or by lessening the supply of labor in it. To do the latter, the trades-unions limit the number of apprentices who may be admitted to the trade. In discussing this device, people generally fix their minds on the beneficiaries of this arrangement. It is desired by everybody that wages should be as high as they can be under the conditions of industry. Our minds are directed by the facts of the case to the men who are in the trade already and are seeking their own advantage. Sometimes people go on to notice the effects of trades-unionism on the employers, but although employers are constantly vexed by it, it is seen that they soon count it into the risks of their business and settle down to it philosophically. Sometimes people go further then and see that, if the employer adds the trades-union and strike risk to the other risks, he submits to it because he has passed it along upon the public and that the public wealth is diminished by trades-unionism, which is undoubtedly the case. I do not remember, however, that I have ever seen in print any analysis and observation of trades-unionism which takes into account its effect in another direction. The effect on employers or on the public would not raise wages. The public pays more for houses and goods, but that does not raise wages. The surplus paid by the public is pure loss, because it is only paid to cover an extra business risk of the employer. If their trades-unions raise wages, how do they do it? They

do it by lessening the supply of labor in the trade, and this they do by limiting the number of apprentices. All that is won, therefore, for those in the trade, is won at the expense of those persons in the same class in life who want to get into the trade but are forbidden. Like every other monopoly, this one secures advantages for those who are in only at a greater loss to those who are kept out. Who, then, are those who are kept out and who are always forgotten in all the discussions? They are the Forgotten Men again; and what kind of men are they? They are those young men who want to earn their living by the trade in question. Since they select it, it is fair to suppose that they are fit for it, would succeed at it, and would benefit society by practicing it; but they are arbitrarily excluded from it and are perhaps pushed down into the class of unskilled laborers. When people talk of the success of a trades-union in raising wages, they forget these persons who have really, in a sense, paid the increase.

Let me now turn your attention to another class of cases. I have shown how, in time past, the history of states has been a history of selfishness, cupidity, and robbery, and I have affirmed that now and always the problems of government are how to deal with these same vices of human nature. People are always prone to believe that there is something metaphysical and sentimental about civil affairs, but there is not. Civil institutions are constructed to protect, either directly or indirectly, the property of men and the honor of women against the vices and passions of human nature. In our day and country, the problem presents new phases, but it is there just the same as it ever was, and the problem is only the more difficult for us because of its new phase which prevents us from recognizing it. In fact, our people are raving and struggling against it in a kind of blind way, not yet having come to recognize it. More than half of their blows, at present, are mis-

directed and fail of their object, but they will be aimed better by and by. There is a great deal of clamor about watering stocks and the power of combined capital, which is not very intelligent or well-directed. The evil and abuse which people are groping after in all these denunciations is jobbery.

By jobbery I mean the constantly apparent effort to win wealth, not by honest and independent production, but by some sort of a scheme for extorting other people's product from them. A large part of our legislation consists in making a job for somebody. Public buildings are jobs, not always, but in most cases. The buildings are not needed at all or are costly far beyond what is useful or even decently luxurious. Internal improvements are jobs. They are carried out, not because they are needed in themselves, but because they will serve the turn of some private interest, often incidentally that of the very legislators who pass the appropriations for them. A man who wants a farm, instead of going out where there is plenty of land available for it, goes down under the Mississippi River to make a farm, and then wants his fellow-citizens to be taxed to dyke the river so as to keep it off his farm. The Californian hydraulic miners have washed the gold out of the hillsides and have washed the dirt down into the valleys to the ruin of the rivers and the farms. They want the federal government to remove this dirt at the national expense. The silver miners, finding that their product is losing value in the market, get the government to go into the market as a great buyer in the hope of sustaining the price. The national government is called upon to buy or hire unsalable ships; to dig canals which will not pay; to educate illiterates in the states which have not done their duty at the expense of the states which have done their duty as to education; to buy up telegraphs which no longer pay; and to provide the capital for enterprises of

which private individuals are to win the profits. We are called upon to squander twenty millions on swamps and creeks; from twenty to sixty-six millions on the Mississippi River; one hundred millions in pensions — and there is now a demand for another hundred million beyond that. This is the great plan of all living on each other. The pensions in England used to be given to aristocrats who had political power, in order to corrupt them. Here the pensions are given to the great democratic mass who have the political power, in order to corrupt them. We have one hundred thousand federal office-holders and I do not know how many state and municipal office-holders. Of course public officers are necessary and it is an economical organization of society to set apart some of its members for civil functions, but if the number of persons drawn from production and supported by the producers while engaged in civil functions is in undue proportion to the total population, there is economic loss. If public offices are treated as spoils or benefices or sinecures, then they are jobs and only constitute part of the pillage.

The biggest job of all is a protective tariff. This device consists in delivering every man over to be plundered by his neighbor and in teaching him to believe that it is a good thing for him and his country because he may take his turn at plundering the rest. Mr. Kelley said that if the internal revenue taxes on whisky and tobacco, which are paid to the United States government, were not taken off, there would be a rebellion. Just then it was discovered that Sumatra tobacco was being imported, and the Connecticut tobacco men hastened to Congress to get a tax laid on it for their advantage. So it appears that if a tax is laid on tobacco, to be paid to the United States, there will be a rebellion, but if a tax is laid on it to be paid to the farmers of the Connecticut Valley, there will be no rebellion at all. The tobacco farmers having been taxed for protected manu-

factures are now to be taken into the system, and the workmen in the factories are to be taxed on their tobacco to protect the farmers. So the system is rendered more complete and comprehensive.

On every hand you find this jobbery. The government is to give every man a pension, and every man an office, and every man a tax to raise the price of his product, and to clean out every man's creek for him, and to buy all his unsalable property, and to provide him with plenty of currency to pay his debts, and to educate his children, and to give him the use of a library and a park and a museum and a gallery of pictures. On every side the doors of waste and extravagance stand open; and spend, squander, plunder, and grab are the watchwords. We grumble some about it and talk about the greed of corporations and the power of capital and the wickedness of stock gambling. Yet we elect the legislators who do all this work. Of course, we should never think of blaming ourselves for electing men to represent and govern us, who, if I may use a slang expression, give us away. What man ever blamed himself for his misfortune? We groan about monopolies and talk about more laws to prevent the wrongs done by chartered corporations. Who made the charters? Our representatives. Who elected such representatives? We did. How can we get bad law-makers to make a law which shall prevent bad law-makers from making a bad law? That is, really, what we are trying to do. If we are a free, self-governing people, all our misfortunes come right home to ourselves and we can blame nobody else. Is any one astonished to find that men are greedy, whether they are incorporated or not? Is it a revelation to find that we need, in our civil affairs, to devise guarantees against selfishness, rapacity, and fraud? I have ventured to affirm that government has never had to deal with anything else.

Now, I have said that this jobbery means waste, plunder,

and loss, and I defined it at the outset as the system of making a chance to extort part of his product from somebody else. Now comes the question: Who pays for it all? The system of plundering each other soon destroys all that it deals with. It produces nothing. Wealth comes only from production, and all that the wrangling grabbers, loafers, and jobbers get to deal with comes from somebody's toil and sacrifice. Who, then, is he who provides it all? Go and find him and you will have once more before you the Forgotten Man. You will find him hard at work because he has a great many to support. Nature has done a great deal for him in giving him a fertile soil and an excellent climate and he wonders why it is that, after all, his scale of comfort is so moderate. He has to get out of the soil enough to pay all his taxes, and that means the cost of all the jobs and the fund for all the plunder. The Forgotten Man is delving away in patient industry, supporting his family, paying his taxes, casting his vote, supporting the church and the school, reading his newspaper, and cheering for the politician of his admiration, but he is the only one for whom there is no provision in the great scramble and the big divide.

Such is the Forgotten Man. He works, he votes, generally he prays — but he always pays — yes, above all, he pays. He does not want an office; his name never gets into the newspaper except when he gets married or dies. He keeps production going on. He contributes to the strength of parties. He is flattered before election. He is strongly patriotic. He is wanted, whenever, in his little circle, there is work to be done or counsel to be given. He may grumble some occasionally to his wife and family, but he does not frequent the grocery or talk politics at the tavern. Consequently, he is forgotten. He is a commonplace man. He gives no trouble. He excites no admiration. He is not in any way a hero (like a popular orator); or a problem

(like tramps and outcasts); nor notorious (like criminals); nor an object of sentiment (like the poor and weak); nor a burden (like paupers and loafers); nor an object out of which social capital may be made (like the beneficiaries of church and state charities); nor an object for charitable aid and protection (like animals treated with cruelty); nor the object of a job (like the ignorant and illiterate); nor one over whom sentimental economists and statesmen can parade their fine sentiments (like inefficient workmen and shiftless artisans). Therefore, he is forgotten. All the burdens fall on him, or on her, for it is time to remember that the Forgotten Man is not seldom a woman.

When you go to Willimantic, they will show you with great pride the splendid thread mills there. I am told that there are sewing-women who can earn only fifty cents in twelve hours, and provide the thread. In the cost of every spool of thread more than one cent is tax. It is paid, not to get the thread, for you could get the thread without it. It is paid to get the Willimantic linen company which is not worth having and which is, in fact, a nuisance, because it makes thread harder to get than it would be if there were no such concern. If a woman earns fifty cents in twelve hours, she earns a spool of thread as nearly as may be in an hour, and if she uses a spool of thread per day, she works a quarter of an hour per day to support the Willimantic linen company, which in 1882 paid 95 per cent dividend to its stockholders. If you go and look at the mill, it will captivate your imagination until you remember all the women in all the garrets, and all the artisans' and laborers' wives and children who are spending their hours of labor, not to get goods which they need, but to pay for the industrial system which only stands in their way and makes it harder for them to get the goods.

It is plain enough that the Forgotten Man and the Forgotten Woman are the very life and substance of society.

They are the ones who ought to be first and always remembered. They are always forgotten by sentimentalists, philanthropists, reformers, enthusiasts, and every description of speculator in sociology, political economy, or political science. If a student of any of these sciences ever comes to understand the position of the Forgotten Man and to appreciate his true value, you will find such student an uncompromising advocate of the strictest scientific thinking on all social topics, and a cold and hard-hearted skeptic towards all artificial schemes of social amelioration. If it is desired to bring about social improvements, bring us a scheme for relieving the Forgotten Man of some of his burdens. He is our productive force which we are wasting. Let us stop wasting his force. Then we shall have a clean and simple gain for the whole society. The Forgotten Man is weighted down with the cost and burden of the schemes for making everybody happy, with the cost of public beneficence, with the support of all the loafers, with the loss of all the economic quackery, with the cost of all the jobs. Let us remember him a little while. Let us take some of the burdens off him. Let us turn our pity on him instead of on the good-for-nothing. It will be only justice to him, and society will greatly gain by it. Why should we not also have the satisfaction of thinking and caring for a little while about the clean, honest, industrious, independent, self-supporting men and women who have not inherited much to make life luxurious for them, but who are doing what they can to get on in the world without begging from anybody, especially since all they want is to be let alone, with good friendship and honest respect. Certainly the philanthropists and sentimentalists have kept our attention for a long time on the nasty, shiftless, criminal, whining, crawling, and good-for-nothing people, as if they alone deserved our attention.

The Forgotten Man is never a pauper. He almost always

has a little capital because it belongs to the character of the man to save something. He never has more than a little. He is, therefore, poor in the popular sense, although in the correct sense he is not so. I have said already that if you learn to look for the Forgotten Man and to care for him, you will be very skeptical toward all philanthropic and humanitarian schemes. It is clear now that the interest of the Forgotten Man and the interest of "the poor," "the weak," and the other petted classes are in antagonism. In fact, the warning to you to look for the Forgotten Man comes the minute that the orator or writer begins to talk about the poor man. That minute the Forgotten Man is in danger of a new assault, and if you intend to meddle in the matter at all, then is the minute for you to look about for him and to give him your aid. Hence, if you care for the Forgotten Man, you will be sure to be charged with *not* caring for the poor. Whatever you do for any of the petted classes wastes capital. If you do anything for the Forgotten Man, you must secure him his earnings and savings, that is, you legislate for the security of capital and for its free employment; you must oppose paper money, wildcat banking and usury laws and you must maintain the inviolability of contracts. Hence you must be prepared to be told that you favor the capitalist class, the enemy of the poor man.

What the Forgotten Man really wants is true liberty. Most of his wrongs and woes come from the fact that there are yet mixed together in our institutions the old mediæval theories of protection and personal dependence and the modern theories of independence and individual liberty. The consequence is that the people who are clever enough to get into positions of control, measure their own rights by the paternal theory and their own duties by the theory of independent liberty. It follows that the Forgotten Man, who is hard at work at home, has to pay both ways.

His rights are measured by the theory of liberty, that is, he has only such as he can conquer. His duties are measured by the paternal theory, that is, he must discharge all which are laid upon him, as is always the fortune of parents. People talk about the paternal theory of government as if it were a very simple thing. Analyze it, however, and you see that in every paternal relation there must be two parties, a parent and a child, and when you speak metaphorically, it makes all the difference in the world who is parent and who is child. Now, since we, the people, are the state, whenever there is any work to be done or expense to be paid, and since the petted classes and the criminals and the jobbers cost and do not pay, it is they who are in the position of the child, and it is the Forgotten Man who is the parent. What the Forgotten Man needs, therefore, is that we come to a clearer understanding of liberty and to a more complete realization of it. Every step which we win in liberty will set the Forgotten Man free from some of his burdens and allow him to use his powers for himself and for the commonwealth.